

Sierra Nevada Conservancy-Progress Report

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2008 (Proposition 84)**

Grantee Name: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

Project title: Tramway Road/A-Line Road Shaded Fuel Break
CEQA Environmental Analysis Project

SNC Reference Number: SNC 460.1

Submittal Date: December 31, 2014

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Check one:

☒ **6-Month Progress Report**

☒ **Final Report**

6-Month Progress Reports should reflect the previous six months. Final Reports should reflect the entire grant period.
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A. Progress Report Summary: (Please provide a general description of work completed during this reporting period.) (March 2014 through December 2014)

All CEQA related work components of the Tramway Fuel Break CEQA project was completed during the current reporting period. This included completion of the draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) documents and their submittal to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to review agencies for the required 30 day period. A number of comments were received via U.S. Mail and email from review agencies and requested changes were incorporated into the revised Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. A staff report was prepared and submitted to the RCDTC Board of Directors which describes the project and changes that were made to the IS/MND and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) prepared for each project to meet the needs of State agencies. The Tramway Fuel Break Project Staff Report also described changes made to original CEQA documents in order to meet the regiments established in the Lassen National Forest's NEPA analysis. The CEQA document was approved through resolution by the RCDTC Board of Directors at its December 17, 2014 meeting.

Final Reporting Period

All CEQA project work has been completed. At the present time Lassen National Forest personnel are finalizing the agency's NEPA document and related decision memo.

B. Deliverables or Outcomes completed during this Reporting Period or Milestones Achieved: (Include specific information, such as public meetings held, agency participation, partnerships developed, or acres mapped, treated or restored.)

In addition to a final IS/MND and MMRP, required Notice of Completion, Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Notice of Determination were completed and submitted to both the State Clearinghouse and the Tehama County Clerk/Recorders Office. At the present time Lassen National Forest personnel are in the process of finalizing its NEPA Environmental Assessment and related Finding of No Significant Impact for this project. Implementation of the of the Tramway fuel break project is expected to occur during the late spring or early summer of 2015 and will be completed by October of the same year.

Final Reporting Period

No additional deliverables are required under the Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant agreement.

C. Challenges or Opportunities Encountered: (Please describe what has worked and what hasn't; include any solutions you initiated to resolve problems. If your project is not on schedule, please explain why here.)

Final Reporting Period

(See response to item D Below)

D. Unanticipated Successes Achieved: (Please describe any additional successes beyond completing scheduled tasks or meeting scheduled milestones.)

Final Reporting Period

Although project implementation was not a component of this CEQA project's work scope, funding for development of the Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line Road/Road 90-A Shaded Fuel Break was secured from the Lassen National Forest through the U.S Forest Service's Wyden Authorization in the amount of \$298,000. Project implementation will begin in early spring 2015.

- E. Compare Actual Costs to Budgeted Costs:** (Please refer to your grant agreement to list your deliverables/budget categories and budgeted costs compared to actual costs incurred during this reporting period in the table below.)

Budget Reporting Period – March 2014 through December 31, 2014

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	Budgeted SNC \$	Actual Dollars Year to Date
Project Management	1,700.00	1,805.00
Project Accounting	2,100.00	2,126.80
Environmental Analysis IS/MND Preparation	8,362.00	9,055.80
CEQA Filing Fees	2,231.00	2,281.25
Archeological Consultant	3,443.00	2,943.60
Biological Survey	1,500.00	00.00
Monitoring	500.00	00.00
Environmental Database/Information Fees	850.00	188.30
Project Materials and Supplies	490.00	500.18
Administrative Overhead	2,374.00	2,505.11
GRAND TOTAL	\$23,550.00	\$21,406.04

Explanation: (if needed)

The Project Schedule, Project Budget and Performance Period (Exhibit “A”) was revised and fully executed as of June 4, 2014.

- F. Do you have information to report on the project-specific Performance Measures for your project?** (If so, please list the Performance Measures below and describe your progress.)

Final Reporting Period

No additional comments. All performance measures have been addressed by project work

- G. Were there any other relevant materials produced under the terms of this Agreement that are not a part of the budgeted deliverables? If so, please attach copies.** (Include digital photos, maps, media coverage of project, or other work products.)

Final Reporting Period

(N/A)

H. **Next Steps:** (Work anticipated in the next 6 months, including location and timing of any scheduled events related to the project.)

Final Reporting Period

All project work has been completed.

Please Complete this Section for FINAL Report ONLY

Capacity-Building Results and Collaboration and Cooperation with Stakeholders:

(What partnerships did you initiate or strengthen as a result of this project? How did they affect the project outcome? If applicable, how did this grant increase your organization's capacity? What is your plan to sustain this increase?)

Although the RCD of Tehama County has a good working relationship with Lassen National Forest personnel, the completion of this project allowed both entities a better understanding of each other's environmental review and analysis processes. It is anticipated that this will be a great help when developing collaborative projects with this and other federal agencies in the future. In addition RCDTC staff has greatly increased its knowledge of the USFS's NEPA process particularly in connection with developing joint CEQA/ NEPA documents for collaborative projects. The RCD greatly improved its database of resource information that will be invaluable when it prepares environmental analysis documents for projects completed within a significant portion of northeastern Tehama County.

Description of Project Accomplishments:

1. Most Significant Accomplishment

Describe in one concise, well-written paragraph, the most significant accomplishment that resulted from this grant.

With the completion of this environmental analysis project, the RCDTC fully analyzed and mitigated potential environmental impacts related to implementation of the 20 mile long Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line Road/Road 90-A Shaded Fuel Break. With this work completed, the RCDTC was able to develop and secure funding to complete development of this fire management infrastructure. Once completed in about 8 months, this significant fire and fuels management infrastructure will protect numerous

communities and resources within the watersheds of Battle Creek, Paynes Creek and Plum Creek.

2. WOW Factor

If applicable, please describe anything that happened as a result of the project or during the project that is particularly impressive.

Due to the collaboration between RCDTC and Lassen National Forest on this environmental analysis project, funding to implement the large fuel break analyzed in the CEQA/NEPA document was secured in less than a year.

3. Design and Implementation

When considering the design and implementation of this project, what lessons did you learn that might help other grantees implement similar work?

It is very important to first discuss the timeline of each organization's environmental analysis process prior to initiating a joint CEQA/NEPA analysis project in order to avoid delays in document preparation. These processes can vary greatly between federal agencies as was discovered by the RCDTC during the execution of this project.

4. Indirect Impact

Please describe any indirect benefits of the project such as information that has been developed as a result of the project is being used by several other organizations to improve decision-making, or a conservation easement funded by this grant that encouraged other landowners in the area to have conservation easements on their property.

As a result of completing this project, the RCDTC developed a large amount of resource information and analyses that can be used in connection with future watershed projects. In addition, it is anticipated that the development of the fuel break infrastructure analyzed in the CEQA/NEPA document will become the basis of an extensive fuel break system within northeastern Tehama County and southeastern Shasta County. This infrastructure will not only provide improved control of wildfire, it will also become a point from which future fuels management activities particularly those related to prescribed burning can be conducted.

5. Collaboration and Conflict Resolution

If you worked in collaboration or cooperation with other organizations or institutions, describe those arrangements and their importance to the project. Also, describe if you encountered conflict in the project and how you dealt with it, or if there was conflict avoided as a result of the project.

Although the RCDTC and Lassen National Forest personnel worked separately on their respective environmental analysis of the fuel break, agreement was required in finalizing the analysis and protection measures that were discussed in the CEQA and NEPA documents. Little if any conflict or misunderstandings developed during the environmental analysis process and any disagreements they did arise were quickly resolved through technical discussions which help to develop a better understating of each organizations environmental analysis processes.

6. Capacity-Building

SNC is interested in both the capacity of your organization, as well as local and regional capacity. Please describe the overall health of your organization including areas in need of assistance. SNC is interested in the strength and involvement of your board, significant changes to your staff, size and involvement of membership. In addition, describe how your project improved capabilities of partners, or the larger community.

In terms of project work, the RCDTC has a significant portfolio of projects to complete during the upcoming year. Much of this work was developed through the efforts of the RCD's two Department of Conservation funded watershed coordinators. This program will end in April 2015 and as a result, the District could lose some of its ability to developed collaborative conservation projects and prepare funding packages for such efforts. Once this funding source is gone, the RCD will need to expend overhead dollars in order to continue development of collaborative efforts which will impact its ability to use these funds for RDC directed projects. Significant among these has been assisting rural communities with fuel management issues. This work was funded by overhead dollars generated by the RCD's Vegetation Management Program which was developed by one of the DOC Watershed Coordinators.

7. Challenges

Did the project face internal or external challenges? How were they addressed? Describe each challenge and any actions that you took to address it. Was there something that SNC did or could have done to assist you? Did you have to change any of your key objectives in response to conditions “on the ground”?

Other than a number of issues related to differences in the CEQA and NEPA process, no significant challenges arose in connection with the development of the Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line Road/Road 90-A Shaded Fuel Break joint CEQA/NEPA documents.

8. Photographs

Grantees are strongly encouraged to submit photos, slides or digital images whenever possible. These images will be used for SNC publications such as annual reports or on the website. Please make sure you clearly identify location, activity, and your project with each submitted image. Images will be credited to the submitting organization, unless specified otherwise.

See CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration document

9. Post Grant Plans

What are the post-grant plans for the project if it does not conclude with the grant? Include a description of the following (if applicable): (1) Changes in operations or scope; (2) Replication or use of findings; (3) Names of other organizations you expect to involve; (4) Plans to support the project financially, and; (5) Communication plans?

With the conclusion of this environmental analysis project, implementation of the fuel break project described in the CEQA/NEPA document will be implemented in the spring of 2015. It is anticipated that this large fire management infrastructure will continue to be expanded by the implementation of similar projects in the future completed by the RCD of Tehama County, the Lassen National Forest, BLM, Lassen Volcanic National Park and Sierra Pacific Industries. Maintenance of the Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line Road/Road 90-A Shaded Fuel break will be completed by Sierra Pacific Industries once project implementation has been completed.

10. Post Grant Contact

Who can be contacted a few years from now to follow up on the project? Please provide name and contact information.

**Victoria Dawley/District Manager
Resource Conservation District of Tehama County
530-527-3013**

SNC-approved Performance Measures: (Please list each Performance Measure for your Project, as identified in your Grant Agreement, and the results/outcomes.)

1. Resources Leveraged in the Sierra Nevada:

The purpose of this performance measure is to measure the additional resources generated as a result of SNC investment. The total value is based on matching funds provided by external, number of volunteer hours, and the value of major in-kind contributions made to a project.

No additional match resources were provided during development of the CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the Tramway Road/A-Line Road/F-Line Road/Road 90-A Shaded fuel break. Lassen National Forest personnel however provided a considerable number of labor hours for the preparation of a NEPA analysis document and related decision memo which allowed the agency to fund implementation of the fuel break in the amount of \$298,000. In addition, Sierra Pacific Industries personnel provided invaluable resource information pertaining to the proposed fuel break project's impact area as well as field work in connection with the necessary cultural resources survey prepared for the CEQA document.

2. Number and Diversity of People Reached:

The purpose of this performance measure is to measure progress of information-sharing and education efforts and inclusiveness of other project efforts such as plan development.

Once both the CEQA and NEPA environmental analysis documents were prepared, the RCDTC and Lassen National Forest published announcements in local newspapers regarding the availability of both documents. In addition the RCDTC filed the CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration document with the State Clearinghouse in order for agency and public review to occur. The document was also posted with the Tehama County Clerk/Recorders Office for local review as well as the RCD's website which provided

additional opportunities for stakeholders to understand the project's scope of work and the environmental analysis that was completed in connection with this effort.

3. Number and Type of Jobs Created:

The purpose of this performance measure is to measure economic benefits to the Sierra Nevada Region by tracking the full-time equivalent jobs created by SNC-funded activities.

This project provided part time employment for 2 RCD project staff as well as 2 administrative personnel. In addition a local archeologist was retained to complete the cultural resource survey. The value of that contract was \$5,000. An SPI forester provided field assistance for this work.

4. Number and Value of New, Improved or Preserved Economic Activities:

The purpose of this performance measure is to measure the types, quantities, and, where appropriate, estimated dollar values of new, improved, or preserved activities, products, and services resulting from the project.

The completion of this environmental analysis project resulted in the RCDTC obtaining a grant agreement in the amount of \$298,000 to complete the fuels treatments described in the SNC funded CEQA document and the NEPA analysis prepared by the Lassen National Forest

Project Specific Performance Measures

Percent of Pre-project and Planning Efforts Resulting in Project

Implementation: The purpose of this Performance Measure (PM) is to provide a measure of progress in moving SNC-funded projects from initial stages of collaboration and planning to action.

The project work for which this environmental analysis project was completed will be initiated during the spring of Spring of 2015. The value of this grant funded work is \$298,000